

## A Long Road Ahead

by Pw'eeek

Category: Misc. Books  
Language: English  
Status: In-Progress  
Published: 1999-12-03 09:00:00  
Updated: 1999-12-03 09:00:00  
Packaged: 2016-04-27 10:19:24  
Rating: K  
Chapters: 1  
Words: 1,245  
Publisher: [www.fanfiction.net](http://www.fanfiction.net)  
Summary: A prelude to Of Mice and Men

### A Long Road Ahead

**\*\*A Long Road Ahead\*\***

> <br> The dust danced in the slanting rays of sunshine as a red-faced boy stood at the black board of the small one room class room. The boy was thirteen, for all he looked like a grown man and was puzzling over a math problem most only have trouble with in the early stages of school. This was not a scene to arouse much interest from his classmates. They had grown up with similar scenes.

><br> "Mr. Small," the teacher's voice ground, "haven't you paid me any attention while I've stood up here every day? Any attention at all to what I've said?" She of course knew that it wasn't lack of attention that was the boy's problem, but she was frustrated and had never been very patient in the first place.

> <br> The big face flinched slightly, but the blank, confused expression remained unwaveringly. This seemed to infuriate the woman. She stood there expectantly, not believing for an instant she'd get a satisfactory answer. She was just one in a long string of teachers over the years, trying to beat some knowledge into the mind behind the oh-so-eager to please face.

> <br> A small, thin boy whispered encouragement "C'mon, Lennie . . .," but his face held the same air of faux expectancy as the teacher's. Lennie's mouth moved slightly, but that was all. His classmates recognized the teacher's mood and expression. It meant they could expect a new teacher sometime in the near future. While they all enjoyed the variety having Lennie in the class room created, more than a few would have preferred a steady teacher for more than the couple of months they usually stayed. Lennie presented teachers with utter defeat. There wasn't one of them who had been able to stay and live with that. Many of the parents wished Lennie's Aunt Clara would teach him herself (she was able enough) but she was adamant in not taking any chances of Lennie feeling separated by something he couldn't help. The other students were fine and bright, not a

troublemaker among them, but teachers found having Lennie Small in their class impossible to live with-and not because he was a troublemaker, of course. Just undeniably and hopelessly unable to retain things in his big head.

> <br> Lennie's hand moved in a nervous, expectant way toward his pocket. His hand disappeared inside. His friend, who had been whispering encouragement, sighed deeply and shut his eyes. Lennie would never learn.

> <br> The teacher's face, which had dissolved into despair, immediately flooded with relief at the sight of something she could honestly yell about. It was what usually made her happy-her main form of relieving stress. She covered her relief with mock rage. "Let's have it," she hissed through her teeth.

> <br> Lennie automatically replied, "Have what?" in his smoothest manner. He didn't seem fazed in the least by the teacher's sudden change in tone.

> <br> "Whatever it is you've got in your pocket. Another mouse, I suppose." (She had learned quickly Lennie's love of petting soft things.) "Take it outside, please." Lennie just stood there, the picture of innocence. "\_Go\_", she said with force. Lennie slowly and silently made his way outside.

><br> "Now then," the teacher said, erasing the problem on the board. One of the kids raised her hand. "Yes, Patricia?"

> <br> "It's time to go, Mrs. Pinforth."

> <br> Mrs. Pinforth looked at the clock. "Oh, homework for tonight . . ." She stared affectionately at the clock, ran a hand through her slightly graying hair. There was the usual expectant pause. "No homework." The students rushed from the classroom. "Have a nice weekend!" she called after them.

><br>

\*\*\*\*\*

> <br> Lennie waited outside by the old fence post (the fence had gone) and waited for his best-and only good-friend. George Milton rushed out the door with his classmates, the early afternoon sun bringing out lighter tones in his dark hair. He was walking beside a freckle-faced blonde girl, taking deep interest in everything she said. He prepared to say good-bye as they neared the fencepost where Lennie stood, expecting her to take the slight curve around Lennie that most kids did-not that Lennie ever noticed. But she kept right on walking beside him.

> <br> Lennie greeted them with a question. "Are we gonna go walking by the creek, George?"

> <br> George shook his head. "No, I'm just gonna walk you home, then Patricia." He gave her a sideways glance, looking for confirmation, which he got in the form of a small smile and nod. A couple pounds seemed to lift off George's shoulders.

> <br> The walk to Lennie's house was peaceful and silent, punctuated by birds chirping, the breeze blowing through the trees, and the soft gurgling of the creek. There was also the passing of Mr. Casp, an irritable old man who snapped at everyone, in his wagon. George had worked on his farm during the summer and of and on since, and had come to the conclusion he didn't much like it. In his plans he was working at a real profession-a lawyer, or a doctor, something of that sort. Something interesting. He'd told Lennie as much several times, and Lennie always listened attentively, if he didn't always remember what George said.

> <br> Aunt Clara could be seen through the kitchen window, waving a

dishcloth through the window as Lennie went inside.

> <br> "How'd you start going around with Lennie?" Patricia asked as they started away from the house. Her family had moved into town months ago, but George had started his friendship with Lennie well before.

> <br> "Well," he began, "I was walking along home one day about a year ago when I saw a couple guys beating up on 'im."

> <br> "No wonder. Easy target?"

> <br> George laughed softly. "Very easy. Lennie just stood there and took it. I asked 'em why they were doing it and they just sort of shrugged and walked away. There wasn't any fun in it. I walked Lennie home, my mom was friends with his aunt before she died. Lennie's Aunt Clara had just baked a pie, and she gave me some. His aunt's a really nice lady. She asked me if I would walk Lennie to and from school."

> <br> "So you have ever since? He's really your friend now, though isn't he?" George nodded. "Doesn't he get on your nerves?"

> <br> "Well, yeah he gets on my nerves sometimes. A kid like that'd get on anyone's nerves sometimes. But he doesn't know how to be mean, and if I ever need to talk to anyone he's right there listening. He even likes to talk himself sometimes, even though most of the time he don't got nothing much to say."

> <br> "This is my house up this way," she said cheerfully. "You gonna stick around with Lennie?"

> <br> "I plan to try and get to a good school someday," George said thoughtfully. "But for now . . . I'm gonna see if his aunt'll let him work on Casp's farm with me this summer. He's the best worker I've ever seen. Really strong."

> <br>

> <em>\*Author's note\* That was written for English, after reading John Stienbecks <em>"Of Mice and Men"\_. It was a great book, and that story hardly does it justice as a prelude.\_

End  
file.